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Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

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FM USMISSION NATO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2401

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 USNATO 5184

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS, 12-31-81
TAGS: PBOR, MOPS, XF, NATO
SUBJECT: U.S. ACTION REGARDING MIDDLE EAST: PERMREPS LUNCH
OCTOBER 26

REF: USNATO 5179

BEGIN SUMMARY: AT PERMREPS LUNCH OCTOBER 26, IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING NAC MEETING ON MIDDLE EAST REPORTED REFTEL, RUMSFELD RESPONDED TO CRITICISM VOICED AT NAC REGARDING LACK OF PRIOR NOTIFICATION OF U.S. ALERT ACTIONS AND LACK OF INFORMATION ON U.S.-SOVIET DEVELOPMENTS. REVIEWING RECORD OF CONSULTATION, RUMSFELD STATED ALLIES HAVE BEEN KEPT ADVISED OF U.S. POLICY OBJECTIVES AND THAT THERE HAD BEEN ABUNDANT OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALLIES TO MAKE THEIR VIEWS KNOWN. HE EXPRESSED HOPE THAT DURING CURRENT WORK ON ATLANTIC RELATIONS SPECIFIC SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING ALLIANCE'S CONSULTATION PROCEDURES, WOULD BE FORTHCOMING, AS OPPOSED TO SIMPLY COMPLAINTS. HE NOTED THAT U.S. MOVES SEEMED TO HAVE HAD THE DESIRED EFFECT ON THE SOVIETS AND THOUGHT THE ALLIES MIGHT HAVE FOUND SOME SATISFACTION IN THAT. RUMSFELD SAID, ON PERSONAL BASIS, HE MAKES NO APOLOGIES FOR U.S. ACTIONS WHATSOEVER. HE ADDED HE WOULD LISTEN WITH INTEREST TO CONSTRUCTIVE SUGGESTIONS TO IMPROVE CONSULTATION. GENERAL THRUST OF COMMENTS BY OTHER PERMREPS WAS TO REGRET BEING COMPLETELY UNINFORMED ABOUT U.S.-SOVIET DEVELOPMENTS AND BEING CAUGHT BY SURPRISE BY U.S. ALERT MEASURES WHILE AT THE SAME TIME BEING ASKED BY U.S. TO
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DEMONSTRATE ALLIANCE SOLIDARITY. END SUMMARY.

1. FOLLOWING BRIEF REMARKS ON THE MIDDLE EAST BY DE STAERCKE AND CATALANO, RUMSFELD, ON PERSONAL BASIS, COMMENTED ON THE STATEMENTS

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MADE BY OTHERS DURING THE NAC MEETING IN THE MORNING OF OCTOBER 26 (REFTEL). RUMSFELD SAID THAT HE HAD GIVEN A GOOD DEAL OF THOUGHT TO THE CRISIS AND TO THE DELIBERATIONS IN THE COUNCIL; ON REFLECTION HE WOULD MAKE NO APOLOGIES FOR U.S. ACTIONS THROUGHOUT THIS PERIOD. LOOKING AT THE CHRONOLOGY OF CONSULTATIONS, THE RECORD SHOWED THAT THE ALLIES HAD BEEN KEPT INFORMED BY THE UNITED STATES AS TO ITS POLICY OBJECTIVES. DURING THIS TIME THERE HAD BEEN NUMEROUS OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE ALLIES TO OFFER RECOMMENDATIONS OR ADVICE. THE UNITED STATES HAD PROVIDED A REASONABLY FULL EXPOSITION OF ITS POLICY OBJECTIVES AS RELATED TO THE ALERT IN HIS INTERVENTION IN THE COUNCIL MEETING OF OCTOBER 25. GIVEN ALL THE ACTIVITY RELATED TO THE U.S. PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES, ALL OF WHICH OCCURRED WITHIN A MATTER OF A SMALL NUMBER OF HOURS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT, IT WAS NOT SURPRISING THAT THE CONSULTATION PROCESS MIGHT BE A FEW HOURS BEHIND EVENTS. RUMSFELD NOTED THAT IN THE COUNCIL MEETING EARLIER IN THE DAY THERE HAD BEEN A SUGGESTION THAT THE UNITED STATES MIGHT HAVE OVER-REACTED IN ORDERING THE ALERT. THE FACT IS, RUMSFELD SAID, THE ALERT HAD APPARENTLY WORKED SO FAR AND PERHAPS THAT SHOULD BE THE TEST. HE ADDED THAT CONVENING A COUNCIL MEETING IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT MIGHT HAVE ALSO BEEN SEEN AS OVER-REACTING, AND ALLIES CAN'T HAVE IT BOTH WAYS.

2. RUMSFELD WENT ON TO SAY THAT HE HAD BEEN A LITTLE SURPRISED, IN REFLECTING ON THE MORNING'S COUNCIL MEETING, THAT MEMBERS OF THE ALLIANCE HAD NOT EXPRESSED SATISFACTION THAT TENSIONS HAD APPARENTLY BEEN SOMEWHAT REDUCED, THAT THE POSSIBILITY OF THE SOVIETS INJECTING TROOPS INTO THE MIDDLE EAST SEEMED TO HAVE BEEN REDUCED, AND THAT THE DETENTE POLICY OF THE ALLIANCE WAS, AT LEAST FOR THE MOMENT, NOT RUPTURED.

3. RUMSFELD REFERRED TO THE EFFECT OF THE MIDDLE EAST CRISIS ON THE ONGOING WORK ON THE ATLANTIC DECLARATION, A SUBJECT WHICH HAD BEEN RAISED IN THE MORNING'S COUNCIL MEETING. HE SAID THAT HE HOPED THAT, IF THERE WERE SUGGESTIONS, THEY WOULD NOW BE PUT FORWARD. IT WAS A GOOD DEAL EASIER TO CRITICIZE THAN IT WAS TO BUILD, AND HE HAD NOT SEEN MANY SPECIFIC SUGGESTIONS AS TO HOW

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THE CONSULTATION PROCESS COULD BE IMPROVED. RUMSFELD ADDED THE HOPE THAT, AFTER FURTHER REFLECTING, THE INSTRUCTED VIEWS OF THE MEMBERS OF THE ALLIANCE ON THE MIDDLE EAST WOULD NOT REFLECT THE TONE THAT HAD BEEN SET IN THE PRECEDING COUNCIL MEETING.

4. BOSS (FRG CHARGE) SAID THAT HE THOUGHT THERE WERE TWO ASPECTS TO THE PROBLEM, ONE SUBSTANTIVE, THE OTHER METHOD. HE SAID HE KNEW OF NO ONE IN THE ALLIANCE WHO DISAGREED WITH THE SUBSTANCE OF WHAT THE U.S. DID WITH THE SOVIETS. THE QUESTIONS RELATED TO METHOD. EVERYONE, HE SAID, WAS AWARE OF THE LONELY RESPONSIBILITY OF A POWER SUCH AS THE UNITED STATES.

5. DE STAERCKE (BELGIUM) SAID THAT HE THOUGHT RUMSFELD WAS RIGHT

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ON EACH OF HIS POINTS BUT THAT HIS CONCLUSION MIGHT BE WRONG.
AN ALLIANCE, DE STAERCKE SAID, REQUIRES A GREAT "CAPITAL OF
FRIENDSHIP." IT WAS IMPORTANT IN ANY ATLANTIC DIALOGUE THAT
THE UNITED STATES SHOULD MAKE GOOD USE OF ITS FRIENDS.

6. ERALP (TURKEY) SAID HE FELT THAT THE UNITED STATES SHOULD
HELP ITS FRIENDS TO BE ITS FRIENDS. THE COUNCIL, HE BELIEVED,
SHOULD HAVE BEEN NOTIFIED PRIOR TO THE ALERT SINCE IT INVOLVED
U.S. FORCES THROUGHOUT THE ALLIANCE COUNTRIES. IT WAS WRONG THAT
THE ALLIES ALL RECEIVED THAT INFORMATION FIRST FROM THE PRESS.

7. SVART (DENMARK) SAID THAT HE HAD COME TO TWO CONCLUSIONS:
1) THAT THE SOVIETS WERE NOT BLUFFING WHEN THEY INDICATED THEY
MIGHT PUT TROOPS IN THE MIDDLE EAST; 2) HE WAS QUITE SURE THAT
THE SOVIETS WOULD HAVE REACTED TO A FAR GREATER EXTENT THAN THE
U.S., HAD THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST BEEN REVERSED.

8. BUSCH (NORWAY) SAID THAT NORWAY DID FEEL THEY NEEDED TO KNOW
MORE ABOUT THE CONTENTS OF THE BILATERAL DISCUSSION BETWEEN THE
UNITED STATES AND THE SOVIET UNION.

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9. DE ROSE (FRANCE) SAID THAT HE FELT THE ALLIES SHOULD TRY TO
AGREE ON A CODE OF ACTION WITH RESPECT TO CRISES OUTSIDE THE
ALLIANCE AREA. HE ASKED THE U.S. TO PUT ITSELF IN THE SHOES OF
THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE ALLIANCE AND THINK THROUGH THE TWO
INTERVENTIONS MADE BY THE UNITED STATES IN THE COUNCIL (OCTOBER 16,
OCTOBER 25). WITH RESPECT TO THE FIRST INTERVENTION, THE UNITED
STATES HAD ASKED THE ALLIES, IN THE INTEREST OF PRESERVING
DETENTE, TO MAKE DEMARCHES TO THE SOVIET UNION INDICATING THAT
THEY CONSIDERED DETENTE TO BE IN JEOPARDY. YET THE ALLIES
DESPITE REPEATED QUESTIONS, DID NOT EVEN KNOW IF THE UNITED STATES
WAS MAKING A SIMILAR DEMARCHE OR WHAT THE REACTIONS WERE FROM THE
SOVIET SIDE. INDEED, SECRETARY KISSINGER HAD MADE AN ALMOST
SIMULTANEOUS PUBLIC STATEMENT INDICATING THAT DETENTE WAS NOT IN

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JEOPARDY. IT LOOKED AS IF THE UNITED STATES WAS ASKING ITS ALLIES TO TAKE SIDES WITH THE ISRAELIS, AND THAT IS INDEED WHAT THE SOVIETS WOULD HAVE TOLD THE ARABS.

10. WITH RESPECT TO RUMSFELD'S SECOND INTERVENTION, ON OCTOBER 25, DE ROSE SAID THAT, IN HIS VIEW, THE U.S. PRECAUTIONARY ALERT AFFECTED EUROPE AND THE ALLIANCE SINCE ALL U.S. FORCES IN EUROPE WERE PLACED ON ALERT. THIS WAS A MATTER THAT RELATED TO A CONFLICT OUTSIDE OF THE ALLIANCE AND ON WHICH THE NATIONS OF THE ALLIANCE HAD DIFFERING VIEWS; YET THE UNITED STATES HAD TAKEN AN ACTION AFFECTING TROOPS STATIONED IN THE ALLINACE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTIFICATION OR CONSULTATION. DE ROSE SAID PERSONALLY THAT IT WAS NOT WITH PLEASURE THAT HE HAD SPOKEN IN THE MORNING COUNCIL MEETING. BUT,
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WE SHOULD NOT CRY OVER SPILT MILK. RATHER WE SHOULD LOOK TO THE FUTURE. HE REPEATED THAT THE ALLIANCE SHOULD EXAMINE HOW IT SHOULD CONSULT ON MATTERS THAT DO NOT RELATE TO NATO TERRITORY BUT WHICH MAY HAVE SOME RELATIONSHIP TO THE ALLIANCE.

11. MENZIES (CANADA) COMMENTED THAT THERE ARE TIMES WHEN A FEW PEOPLE MUST MAKE THE DECISIONS. HE RECOGNIZED THAT THE UNITED STATES CARED ABOUT ITS ALLIANCE RELATIONSHIPS, AND HE THOUGHT IT IMPORTANT TO DISCUSS HOW THE UNITED STATES WAS GOING TO DEAL WITH ITS ALLIES. WE OUGHT TO SEEK WAYS, HE THOUGHT, TO IMPROVE THE CONSULTATION PROCESS SO THAT WE CAN PRESERVE ALLIANCE SOLIDARITY, GIVEN THE FACT THAT ALLIED GOVERNMENTS MUST FACE PUBLIC OPINION AND A FREE PRESS DAILY. HE THOUGHT IT WAS PERHAPS BOTH UNFORTUNATE AND FORTUITOUS THAT THE MIDDLE EAST CRISIS COINCIDED WITH THE WORK ON THE ATLANTIC DECLARATIONS. THIS WOULD DEMONSTRATE VIVIDLY THE IMPORTANCE OF THE WORDS IN THE DECLARATION REGARDING CONSULTATION.

12. SPIERENBURG (NETHERLANDS) SUMMED UP BY SAYING THAT PART OF THE PROBLEM WAS SUBSTANTIVE AND PART PSYCHOLOGICAL. THE ALLIES WANT A FEELING OF PARTICIPATION BUT, CONVERSELY, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THE ALLIES OF THE UNITED STATES WORK TO PROVIDE SOLIDARITY. HE THOUGHT THAT THE CONSULTATION PROCESS COULD BE IMPROVED BOTH SUBSTANTIVELY AND IN ATTENTION TO THE PSYCHOLOGICAL NEEDS THE FEELING OF PARTICIPATION. RUMSFELD ADDED THAT HE KNEW THAT THE PRESIDENT, SECRETARY KISSINGER, AND CERTAINLY HIMSELF, WERE ANXIOUS TO WORK TO IMPROVE ALLIANCE SOLIDARITY AND THE ATLANTIC RELATIONSHIP.

13. COMMENT: THE MOOD OF THE LUNCHEON MEETING WAS ABOUT THE SAME AS THAT OF THE MORNING'S COUNCIL MEETING, BOTH BEING SOMEWHAT TENSE. IT IS APPARENT THAT MOST OF THE ALLIES FELT EMBARRASSED BY NOT BEING EVEN GENERALLY AWARE OF WHAT HAS BEEN HAPPENING IN THE U.S.-SOVIET DISCUSSIONS. THEY WERE FURTHER SURPRISED AND MADE TO FEEL IRRELEVANT BY THE CALLING OF THE ALERT WITHOUT PRIOR NOTIFICATION INDEED WITHOUT NOTIFICATION UNTIL MORE THAN SEVEN HOURS LATER AND WITH LITTLE EXPLANATION AFTERWARDS. EACH ALLIED GOVERNMENT THAT SHARES THESE FEELINGS, AND WE SUSPECT THAT

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MOST DO, WILL FIND IT MORE DIFFICULT TO EXPRESS SYMPATHY FOR
FUTURE U.S. ACTIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST. ALLIANCE RELATIONS IN
MY VIEW CAN FAIRLY BE DESCRIBED AS STRAINED. OUR ALLIES DO NOT
SAY IT, BUT I BELIEVE THEY ARE EMBARRASSED AT NOT KNOWING WHAT
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IS GOING ON - EVEN WHAT IS GOING ON ON THEIR SOIL - WITH RESPECT
TO THE PRECAUTIONARY ALERT. AND, FURTHER, THEY ARE EMBARRASSED
THAT THEY ARE EMBARRASSED AND FIND IT DIFFICULT TO ANSWER TO
COLLEAGUES IN THEIR GOVERNMENTS, TO THE ANTI-U.S. AND ANTI-NATO
SENTIMENT, THEIR PARLIAMENTS OR THEIR PRESS. IT MAKES THEM FEEL
THEY ARE NEXT TO IRRELEVANT IN THE TRULY IMPORTANT MATTERS.
THIS IS THE FEELING NOT IN NATO ALONE, BUT IN ALLIED GOVERNMENTS,
MANY OF WHICH ARE ORGANIZED BY COALITION OR A NARROW MARGIN OF A
FEW VOTES.

13. I BELIEVE WASHINGTON SHOULD CONSIDER ACTIONS SOON TO COUNTERACT
THIS PROBLEM. FURTHER, TO AVOID AGGRAVATING IT, I SUGGEST THAT
SECDEF PRESS CONFERENCE COMMENTS AND DEPT OF STATE PRESS COMMENTS,
AS QUOTED ON ARMED FORCES NETWORK IN EUROPE, BE MODIFIED IN
FUTURE TO AVOID EXPRESSING DISSATISFACTION WITH NATO ALLIES
GENERALLY. SUCH REPORTING WILL CONTRIBUTE TO COALESCING ALLIES
AGAINST U.S. ON MIDEAST ISSUE. IF U.S. HAS REASON TO BE CRITICAL
OF SPECIFIC EUROPEAN ALLIES WE SHOULD SO SPECIFY, AND NOT LUMP
THEM ALL TOGETHER. END COMMENT.

14. DEPARTMENT REPEAT TO OTHER POSTS AS DESIRED.

RUMSFELD

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